

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 EA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /083 W

----- 110418

R 051615Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7984

INFO USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0010

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM

SUBJ: KEREKOU'S NEW YEAR ADDRESS TO CHIEFS OF DIP MISSIONS

REF COTONOU 6

SUMMARY: THIS YEAR PRES KEREKOU'S NEW YEARS ADDRESS TO THE CHIEFS OF DIP MISSIONS DEALT LARGELY WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE CALLED FOR A NEW WORLD POLITICAL ORDER TO SUPPLEMENT THE NEW ECONOMIC WORLD ORDER THAT HE WAS COMING INTO BEING. EXCEPT FOR APPROVAL OF ECOWAS, HE IGNORED THE PRB'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS WHICH ARE UNIFORMLY POOR. ALL OF HIS CRITICISM OF ILLS OF WORLD WAS AIMED AT WEST AND PARTICULARLY AT USG THOUGH WE WERE NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED. HE HAILED "LIBERATION" OF INDOCHINA COUNTRIES, EXPRESSED SHOCK AT "SILENCE OF COMPLICITY" OF "CERTAIN POWERS" RE RACIST SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. HE ALLEGED THAT THERE WAS A "TENDENCY OF CERTAIN POWERS TO TRY TO KEEP OTHER STATES DEPENDENT ON THEM BY ALL SORTS OF PRESSURES." HE IMPLIED THAT SOME POWERS DID NOT YET ACCEPT BENIN'S INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY. AND HE DEMANDED MORE AID. END SUMMARY

1. ON 31 DEC PRES KEREKOU EXCHANGED NEW YEARS'S GREETINGS WITH THE DIP CORPS ASSEMBLED AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. HE OPENED HIS MESSAGE WITH PRAISE FOR THE EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN OVER THE PAST
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YEAR BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TOWARD THE ESTABLISH-

MENT OF A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER, WHICH HE HOPED WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY CONCRETE MEASURES. THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF ALL STATES MUST NOT, HE WARNED, BE GOVERNED "BY THE TENDENCY OF CERTAIN POWERS TO TRY TO KEEP OTHER STATES DEPENDENT ON THEM BY ALL SORTS OF PRESSURES." KEREKOU CALLED FOR THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER TO BE COMPLEMENTED BY A NEW INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ORDER IN WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE SOLUTION OF MAJOR WORLD PROBLEMS.

2. HE REAFFIRMED BENIN'S ATTACHMENT TO REGIONAL COOPERATION AND CITED AS A MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF 1975 THE CREATION OF ECOWAS.

3. KEREKOU CHARACTERIZED 1975 AS A YEAR OF "GREAT VICTORIES OF CERTAIN FRIENDLY AND BROTHERLY ASIAN AND AFRICAN PEOPLES, WHO NEVER CEASED TO FIGHT WITH TENACITY TO RECOVER THEIR FREEDOM AND TOTAL INDEPENDENCE...THE WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION WHICH EMBRACED ALL OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA ENDED WITH THE TOTAL LIBERATION OF THE VIETNAMESE AND LAOTIAN PEOPLES AND IT ENABLED THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THEIR DESTINY." HE ALSO MENTIONED EX-PORTUGUESE GUINEA-BISSAO, CAPE VERDE, MOZAMBIQUE AND SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE.

4. TURNING TO ANGOLA, HE SAID BENIN PEOPLE, ITS MILITARY GOVT AND ITS PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE "ARE SHOCKED BY THE SILENCE OF COMPLICITY OF CERTAIN STATES, IN THE FACE OF THE RECOLONIZATION OF ANGOLA BY THE RACIST FORCES OF SOUTH AFRICA...WE DOUBT THAT ONE CAN TALK ABOUT DETENTE...SO LONG AS CERTAIN COUNTRIES, IN THE NAME OF WHATEVER 'CORDON SANITAIRE', PREVENT OTHER STATES FROM REALIZING THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR A NEW SOCIETY AND A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR PEOPLES."

5. KEREKOU CALLED FOR "SCRUPULOUS RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEMS, FREELY CHOSES BY INDEPENDENT AND SOVEREIGN COUNTRIES," AND HE IMPLIED THAT THIS PRINCIPLE HAD NOT YET BEEN ACCEPTED BY SOME POWERS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH BENIN.

6. HE THEN INFORMED THE CHIEFS OF MISSION, AS IF HE WERE LECTURING THEM, THAT THE "LIVING FORCES" OF THE BENINESE NATION HAD CHOSEN FREELY TO THROW OFF THE CHAINS OF IMPERIALISM AND CONFIDENTIAL

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COLONIALISM AND, WITH THE COUNTRY'S OWN RESOURCES, TO BUILD A NEW SOCIETY BASED ON MARXIST-LENINIST PRINCIPLES. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT EXPECTED OTHER COUNTRIES TO DEMONSTRATE "SINCERE RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE BENINESE STATE, ITS OPTIONS AND ITS OBJECTIVES."

7. LASTLY HE CALLED FOR "STRENGTHENING OF THE RELATIONS OF COOPERATION" (THE GENTEEL LOCAL EXPRESSION FOR FOREIGN AID)

"BETWEEN EACH OF YOUR GOVERNMENTS AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN."

8. AS KEREKOU LEFT THE ROOM HE SHOUTED BACK THAT HE WANTED "AID" FROM ALL GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED IN COTONOU. THEREUPON THE CHIEFS OF MISSION AND MEMBERS OF THEIR STAFFS WERE HASTILY DISMISSED, WITHOUT CHAMPAGNE OF COURSE, TO MAKE ROOM FOR SOME REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS THAT WERE POURING IN.

9. COMMENT. KEREKOU'S CRITICISM OF ILLS OF WORLD WAS AIMED AT THE WEST. ALTHOUGH THE USG WAS NOT ACCUSED BY NAME (PORTUGAL WAS THE ONLY WESTERN COUNTRY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THE ADDRESS), IT WAS CLEARLY THE MAIN TARGET OF KEREKOU'S REMARKS. THE REFERENCES TO "NATIONAL LIBERATION" OF THE INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES, "THE SILENCE OF COMPLICITY OF CERTAIN STATES IN THE FACE OF INVASION AND RECOLONIZATION OF ANGOLA BY RACIST SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES," THE CHARGE THAT SOME POWERS, IN THE NAME OF DETENTE, AIM AT CREATION OF NEUTRAL ZONES THAT IN EFFECT PREVENT OTHER STATES FROM CREATING NEW SOCIETIES, AND THE DEMAND FOR UNILATERAL RESPECT FOR BENINESE SOVEREIGNTY, "OPTIONS," AND OBJECTIVES -- ALL THESE REFERENCES, WHICH CONSTITUTE THE SHARP EDGES OF THE ADDRESS, ARE AIMED AT THE UNITED STATES MORE THAN AT ANYONE ELSE. LIKEWISE, THE DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL AID IS ADDRESSED MAINLY TO THE USG AS WELL AS TO FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY.

10. KEREKOU'S CHARGE OF "SILENCE OF COMPLICITY OF CERTAIN STATES" RE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA, MEANT MOSTLY AS CRITICISM OF USG AND ALSO PERHAPS OF ZAIRE, IS MADE IN THE FACE OF VARIOUS USG PRONOUNCEMENTS, NOTABLY THOSE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OF DECEMBER 23. WE PROVIDED FOREIGN MINISTRY THE FULL FRENCH TEXT OF THAT PRESS CONFERENCE, AS WELL AS A FRENCH SUMMARY OF THE HIGHLIGHTS (BASED ON STATE 302323). THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND KEREKOU, WHO ARE ILL INFORMED GENERALLY
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RE THE POLICIES AND ACTIONS OF THE USG AND OTHER COUNTRIES, EITHER DID NOT READ OUR NOTE OR IGNORED IT.

11. UNLIKE KEREKOU'S NEW YEAR ADDRESS TO THE CHIEFS OF MISSION LAST YEAR, THIS ONE DID DEAL MOSTLY WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS. IT REFLECTED A DETERMINATION, ALREADY MANIFESTED AT THE THIRTIETH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO SPEAK OUT AGGRESSIVELY ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING THOSE HAVING NO RELATIONSHIP TO BENIN'S NATIONAL INTERESTS (BUT CONSIDERED VITAL BY THE PRB'S COMMUNIST AND RADICAL THIRD-WORLD FRIENDS).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, INDEPENDENCE, RECOGNITION, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COTONO00010
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760002-1038
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760187/aaaaczjb.tel
Line Count: 165
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KEREKOU'S NEW YEAR ADDRESS TO CHIEFS OF DIP MISSIONS
TAGS: PFOR, DM, ECOWAS, (KEREKOU, MATHIEU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006